



Stanley Harold Winfield

Like many of us, Stan Winfield in his later years contemplated what would be written about him when the time came. He went further and suggested an opening line, an adaptation of Hamlet's lament for Yorick: "Alas, poor Stanley, I knew him well...". On August 14, 2011, just two days before his 88th birthday, this publication lost one of its most devoted readers. Stan's first task when the *Advocate* arrived was to go directly to the "Nos Disparus" column to make sure (as he put it) that he was not one of its subjects. It is now time to write about Stanley.

So, to start again, Alas, poor Stanley, I knew him well—a gentle and sensitive man, who loved being a lawyer, and whose outstanding qualities included loyalty, patriotism and dedication to family, friends and community.

Born and raised in Calgary, the youngest of four brothers, Stan envied his siblings, who, as war threatened, were old enough to sign up for service training while he had to be content joining the Army Cadets. His desire for adventure and to assert his independence resulted in his running away from home—riding a freight train to Revelstoke with a pal and making an inglorious return home to face the music. Stan left high school early for a full-time job at the Calgary Film Exchange and later with Universal Pictures—in the shipping department. But he was able to say that he had a job in show business. And so began his lifelong fascination with theatre, stage and movies. His grandfather had a subscription to *The New York Times*, and young Stan soon found the entertainment pages. He imagined himself in Manhattan, and as he recorded in one of his diaries (which he generously left for his fam-

ily and friends), he would “daydream about living on Park Avenue, wearing a tuxedo and sipping a martini”.

In the meantime, World War II was underway and Stan’s 18th birthday finally arrived. On August 16, 1941, he was accepted into the RCAF “for the duration” by the recruiting centre in Calgary and assigned the rank of Aircraftman Second Class (“AC2”). His hope, to be a pilot in air crew, was dashed when it was discovered he was colour blind. Instead, he was assigned to administrative duties as part of the ground crew.

Fervently hoping that the war wouldn’t end before he could become part of it, Stan was shipped out to Trenton, Ontario, for training in January 1942. Five months later he was told that he would be posted “overseas”. His exhilaration with that news was tempered when his orders required that he report to #1 Group Headquarters in St. John’s, Newfoundland, then a Crown Colony of Great Britain. But the good news was that he had been promoted to AC1, and could put an extra patch with “CANADA” on the shoulder insignia of his uniform. He loved to wear what he referred to as “the King’s uniform” and soon came to have an enduring affection for Newfoundlanders.

Over the next 15 months Stan was promoted to corporal, then sergeant and classified as a “Clerk Intelligence.” After assignments to Rivers, Manitoba, and then Winnipeg, in April 1945 he was finally posted to London, England. Although the war in Europe ended on May 8, 1945, for Stan the best (or worst) was yet to come.

Four days after VE Day, Stan was part of the administrative leadership directing a large Allied convoy in Holland through northwestern Germany, to the city of Celle, to establish a “tent city” as part of the British Air Force of Occupation. Under the command of his mentor and later friend, Squadron Leader Ted Aplin of Toronto, Stan participated in the horrific experience of patriating the Belsen concentration camp and the demobilization of a Luftwaffe barracks and German forces in the area. Part of that responsibility included assisting the survivors who remained within the camp in early June 1945 to resume their lives with the benefit of necessities sourced by Stan and his colleagues.

Stan was given the honour of unfurling the last RCAF flag to fly in the British Zone of Occupation. He then sailed from The Hague to England and on to Vancouver, where he was discharged on June 7, 1946, after five years of service. Stan’s own modest account of his contribution was recorded in his diary as follows:

I had survived the war, never ever in real danger, unlike many thousands of others in the Allied forces. I had no control over what I was to do, nor where I was to serve...I simply did the job for which I was selected and did it as best I could.

Stan's military career continued with three years in the Canadian Officers' Training Corps, and he joined the Reserve Army in 1950 as a lieutenant. He retired in 1965 with the rank of major in the Canadian Intelligence Corps. He also served as president of the Canadian Military Intelligence Association and its successor, the Canadian Intelligence and Security Association, from 1974 to 1978.

Stan took advantage of the "re-establishment credits" provided for returning soldiers by the Department of Veterans Affairs. He completed high school, went on to UBC for three years of arts and then to law school. He survived Fort Camp and graduated as part of the class of 1952 with several other returned soldiers and friends. He articulated to Harold Tupper and was called to the bar in November 1953. He briefly practised on his own in Vancouver, then joined Allstate Insurance Company as an adjuster in Vancouver and Victoria. During the next eight years he was appointed B.C. claims manager and developed lifelong friendships with George Gregory (later Gregory J. of the B.C.S.C.), Irv Epstein and George Kincaid. He returned to private law practice in June 1963, and in various arrangements practised for nine years with, *inter alia*, Gus Kroll, Rafe Mair and Mike Jeffery.

In 1972 he was appointed chair of the WCB Board of Review. In 1973 he accepted the position of senior counsel with the newly formed Insurance Corporation of British Columbia ("ICBC"). In 1978 he was appointed chief counsel and served in that capacity for eight years, until he retired. Thereafter, he agreed to consult as special counsel-legal services, ending his career with ICBC in 1989 after 17 years during the corporation's nascent, evolving and maturing years. Throughout that time he was not only advising the corporation, but was very often the main point of contact with the profession. He did so fairly and with an even hand. He regarded these years as his most fulfilling professionally as he blazed the trail for corporate initiatives that remain in effect. He did so by listening carefully and applying an egalitarian and principled approach to managing and problem solving.

Stan's adult personal life was anchored by Odile Bidan Winfield, from Elbeuf, Normandy, whom he met in 1957. They were married in 1958 and were blessed with two sons, Marc and Stefan. Stan proudly described his sons as having the personal qualities of "rectitude, openness and honesty". Marc and his wife, Yuyu, live in a village near Jakarta, Indonesia. Stefan and his wife, Shelley Stewart Hunt, live in Vancouver. Their first child, Wesley Henry Winfield, whose birth had been much anticipated by his grandfather Winfield, was born on October 20, 2011.

Odile and Stan were married for 53 years. During that time they not only successfully raised a family but also maintained separate careers, with Odile working in health services after the boys were well established in school. As

a couple, Stan and Odile were generous to a wide circle of friends. They each possessed an élan that made them sought-after guests. Stan was absolutely right when he described Odile as a "most beautiful, intelligent and refined person". Stanley was the quintessential anglophile, with a love of language and literature. Odile shares that same passion for language and literature. To his credit, Stan never concealed the fact that Odile almost always beat him at Scrabble. They spent the last 20 years of their retirement in New Westminster as active members of that community. They were able to travel the world together, and they shared a common curiosity and abiding interest in the human condition and the fate of Mother Earth.

Stan's community involvement at various times included being a member of the National Board of Directors of UNICEF, president of the Vancouver Little Theatre Association, secretary of the Raymond Burr Theatre for the Performing Arts, secretary and chair of the Scholarship Committee of the Sir Winston Churchill Society, president of the Westminster Club, member of the Board of Directors of the Douglas College Foundation, secretary and member of the New Westminster Policing Committee, president and treasurer of the Jewish Historical Society of B.C., director of the Western Society for Senior Citizens' Services and an international election observer in Bosnia in 1996 and 1997.

Soon after the war's end and his return to Canada, Stan realized his boyhood dream of visiting New York City, and went on to do so more than 60 times. He would describe in exciting detail the shows he saw, the people he met and the institutions he visited in that wonderful city. He was fascinated by celebrity and by the famous people he met along the way, and led you sometimes to suspect that he might have preferred a career in show business. But that was not to be. He was proud of his profession. He understood the professional responsibility lawyers have to the rule of law and to serving the interests of the public generally and clients in particular. He was also a patriot and a proud Canadian. He saw serving his profession as part of his contribution to his country. That service took many forms: he was a member of the council of the B.C. Branch of the Canadian Bar Association; a director and member of the Management Board of the Canadian Bar Insurance Association; a lecturer at the UBC Law School on the *Insurance (Motor Vehicle) Act and Regulations*; the first secretary/treasurer of the UBC Law Alumni Association, and its organizational horsepower during its initial years; a member and later chair of the New Westminster Court of Revision and a member of the Board of Referees, Canada Employment Insurance Commission.

Stan Winfield lived a full and useful life. He was utterly reliable and always came prepared for any task he took on. He was somewhat shy, but not uncertain; curious, but not cynical. He had a wry sense of humour and loved

a good party. His recreation was spending time with his many friends, among them his great friends Val Christie and Rolf Weddigen, and the ferment that came from engaging in informed discussion. He was a careful and patient listener, and a great audience. He had a low threshold for conceit and was a true and loyal friend. All of these qualities remain as his legacy.

Alas, poor Stanley, we are privileged, who knew him well.

Paul D.K. Fraser, Q.C.

